

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1860

COMUS JAPAN YOKOTA AB

USAGO MAKIMINATO

18TH TFW KADENA

MARCORB CAMP BUTLER

OAC CAMP BUTLER

OAF0 CAMP BUTLER

COMFELACTS OKINAWA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, JA

SUBJECT: BASE LAND ISSUE

SUMMARY: A PREFECTURAL GOVT POLL REVEALS ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF OKINAWAN BASE LANDOWNERS DO NOT WANT THEIR LAND RETURNED, MAINLY BECAUSE GOJ RENTAL PAYMENTS ARE HIGH. THE LOCAL PRESS ACKNOWLEDGES THIS IS A BLOW TO THE LEFTIST CAMPAIGN FOR IMMEDIATE ABOLISHMENT OF U.S. BASES. END SUMMARY

1. THE OKINAWAN PREFECTURAL GOVT ANNOUNCED ON SEPT 27 THE RESULTS OF A POLL TAKEN ON THE VIEWS OF LANDOWNERS WHO PRESENTLY RENT LAND TO THE GOJ FOR AMERICAN AND SDF BASES. 3039 LANDOWNERS (ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL) WERE QUERIED AND 824 (SOME 29 PERCENT) REPLIED. 51.3 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDEES SAID THEY DID NOT WANT THEIR LAND RETURNED; 27.5 PERCENT PLACED CONDITIONS ON ITS RETURN; ONLY 21.1 PERCENT SAID FLATLY THEY WANTED THEIR LAND BACK. AS THEIR REASON FOR NOT WANTING THE LAND BACK LANDOWNERS MENTIONED

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THE GENEROUS PAYMENTS FOR IT FROM THE GOJ AND DIFFICULTY OF

USING THE LAND ONCE THEY GET IT BACK. MOST LANDOWNERS WERE REPORTED AS OLDER PEOPLE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON LAND RENTALS FOR THEIR INCOME. THE POLL OF LANDOWNERS WHO HAD ALREADY RECEIVED BACK THEIR BASE LANDS REVEALED THAT 56.7 PERCENT OF THE LAND RETURNED REMAINS UNUSED.

2. LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THESE FINDINGS BEWAILED THAT THIS IS A BLOW AGAINST THE CAMPAIGN FOR IMMEDIATE ABOLISHMENT OF AMERICAN BASES. THE PAPERS LAID RESPONSIBILITY ON THE NATIONAL AND PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENTS FOR NOT DEVISING SUITABLE SCHEMES FOR CIVIL USE OF THE LAND THAT WOULD GIVE THE OWNERS AS MUCH INCOME AS BASE RENTAL. ALSO BLAMED IS THE GOVT FAILURE TO HAVE COMPLETED CADASTRAL SURVEYS CLARIFYING LAND OWNERSHIP WHICH STILL REMAINS CONFUSED FOLLOWING THE WARTIME DESTRUCTION OF LAND RECORDS.

3. COMMENT: THE LEFTIST CAMPAIGN FOR IMMEDIATE RETURN OF OUR MILITARY FACILITIES HAS BEEN BADLY UNDERCUT BY LANDOWNER CONTENTMENT WITH THE FAT GOJ BASE LAND RENTALS. THE SPECTACLE OF RETURNED AREAS LIKE CAMPS CHINEN AND BOONE STANDING UNUSED IS CHILLING TO THOSE WHO DEPEND ON THEIR LAND INCOME. LOCAL OKINAWAN POLITICAL AUTHORITIES HAVE THUS HAD TO QUIET DOWN ON THIS ISSUE, ALTHOUGH THEY REMAIN ANXIOUS FOR RETURN OF SPECIFIC AREAS IMPORTANT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING. WHILE IT CLEARLY IS TO AMERICAN INTEREST ALSO TO RETURN CONSPICUOUS AREAS NO LONGER USEFUL FOR OUR PURPOSES, LOCAL POLITICAL PRESSURE IS FAR BELOW WHAT IT WAS TWO YEARS AGO. WE WILL, HOWEVER, STILL GET FLAK ON SUCH GROUNDS AS NOT GIVING BACK EXACTLY THE PIECES OF LAND PEOPLE WANT. IRONICALLY, A SEPT 29 EDITORIAL, AFFIRMING THE PROPER OBJECTIVE OF THE IMMEDIATE ABOLITION OF U.S. BASES, WENT ON TO GRIPE ABOUT BOTH BASE RENTALS AND LAND RETURNS, SAYING THE U.S. MILITARY QTE JUST THROWS AWAY THE PEOPLE AND LAND THEY NO LONGER NEED END QTE
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